

USC School of Dramatic Arts

SEMINAR in THEATER DESIGN THTR 431

Spring 2022 Fridays 9:00 - 11:50AM

Location: WPH 103

TBA: Various locations around Los Angeles
as scheduling, Covid and availability permits

Instructor: Terry Ann Gordon

Office: Costume Dept

Office Hours: Thursdays 10-11 by Appointment

Contact Info: tagordon@usc.edu

Cell: (818) 636-2729

Course Description and Overview

The THTR 431 Senior Seminar in Theatrical Design is designed to offer graduating BFA and BA students an opportunity to meet working professionals in their individual and specific fields of study. When available, the class will visit off campus Theatres, Television, Film and Entertainment studios and venues. Students will be exposed to different aspects of “the business”, both in and out of their respective disciplines, showcasing career paths not previously considered or recognized.

In addition to venue visitations, students will participate in a variety of panels with guest lecturers/ working professionals in the industry. Students are responsible for researching areas of interest perhaps not presented in the classroom. These interests should be presented to the instructor for inclusion in our studies.

All students will be required to present a final paper reviewing each of the semester’s activities, panels and venues.

Learning Objectives

Seminar in Theater is designed to introduce and offer students professional networking opportunities suited to their career goals.

Students will be expected to interact with professionals, learn and hone interview techniques and present their portfolios/websites for critique and review.

Prerequisite(s): Senior SDA Production Student (or approved enrollment)

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: A functional understanding of generally accepted Theatrical/Entertainment terminology.

Required Materials

Required Research:

- Preparatory research on our various guest lecturers and sites to be visited
- “Know who’s in the room”
- Prepare questions appropriate to your design discipline as relevant to the guest professional.
- Engage the guest with questions. For example:
 - how to land that first job
 - how to network
 - what are the jobs expectations
 - what are the pitfalls
 - what is considered proper etiquette
 - how did they begin
 - how long did it take to become established
 - Consider union?
 - what was their training
 - what would they recommend
 - what would they do differently

Required Supplies

- Notebook/Computer—Student’s preference and should contain panelists contact info. for future networking
- Followup thank you’s and additional questions

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Communication

Hopefully, we will visit varied locations and meet many new people during this class. It’s incredibly important to prepare specifically for the days activity. This preparation may include reading, research, writing, and creating site/guest artist specific questions. Students will be required to be alert, inquisitive and polite. Participation is required.

Working professionals will be our guests and as they’ve taken time out of very busy schedules, all students are expected to attend and be engaged in discussion. Your participation will determine your level of success in this potential career investment course.

Grade breakdown is as follows:

Attendance, prep and participation	50%
Final Review paper/ Showcase	50%

Resource Presentations: Final review paper: (50% of grade)

Students will collect and organize resource materials gathered from semester's site visits, in-class projects and other source locations, to be presented at the end of the semester during the final.

Each student will be responsible to write a review/critique of each classes event. The minimum should be a one page double spaced essay per each session. The maximum writing is up to the students enthusiasm for the guest or site.

Each Essay should include:

- description of the site/guest's job criteria, duties.
- surprise job aspects not realized by the student..
- possibility of career option for the individual student
- value to the student: positive and negative
- students opinions and observations

The paper will be submitted as the final on the scheduled final/showcase day.

Preparation and Participation (50% of grade)

Attendance is mandatory.

Missing a class cannot be made up as your participation is essential to the class success. . Arriving more than 15 minutes late will be considered tardy, frequent tardiness will constitute an unexcused absence. Coming late to the session will be rude and inconsiderate to our panelists.

You are allowed 1 unexcused absence, after that your grade will be reduced by one letter grade for subsequent unexcused absences.

Contact the professor by phone or email ahead of class to explain any upcoming absence and to receive assignment information. Missing class due to a SDA production will not be considered an "excused" absence. Excused absences are – sickness, family situations (i.e. death or emergency) and University recognized religious holidays.

If possible, a majority of the class meetings will be off-campus. It is the responsibility of the student to manage transportation to and from every off campus site.

Occasionally non-class time visits may occur. **The class will be subject to the availability of our “guests” and last minute adjustments may be necessary.** Students will be notified of these changes as quickly as possible and all care will be taken to facilitate both the professional and students needs.

Above attendance parameter’s hold true for ALL off-site classes.

As the course is subject to venue and panelists availability Students will often be alerted via email regarding any changes or agenda updates. All students are required to confirm receipt of all email/text updates.

Semester Schedule

Week 1 **Discuss class Syllabus and expectations for Semester**

Assignment: Prepare for next class session. Work on your personal resume and bring at least 3 sample variations to class as well as sample professional resumes. Also bring 3 possible business card designs for yourself as well as samples of professional cards you like. We’ll look at current resumes, portfolio ‘expectations’ and websites, view various personal career websites and hopefully have a guest website creator to review and discuss your current sites.

Week 2 **Review websites and discuss with Website creator.**

Week 3-9 **Class Tours and Lectures: Tentative and open to change**

As it is nearly impossible to pre-schedule all off-site activities weeks in advance; visits, tours and guest lectures will be announced on a monthly and occasionally weekly basis. Both off-site trips and lectures/guests will be chosen from a variety of possibilities. Based on students needs and venue/panelists availability this course and students must be flexible.

Tentative Field Trips TBA due to Covid restrictions

- LA Opera
- CTG backstage
- National touring productions (PSM)
- Local major film studios, i.e. Paramount, Universal, Sony
- Local theatre organizations
- LACMA/Museum of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

- Local scenic shops (Cal Theming, Scenic Route, ABC, Imagineering etc...)
- Local rental shops (props, event and theatre lighting, film lighting, etc...)
- Getty Villa-Theatre venue
- Getty Center
- Disneyland (backstage)
- Studio Audience 'taping': Show TBA
- Professional Theatrical production TBA
- Varied Entertainment Production facilities: Escape Room, Theme park production

Lecturers/Panelists.... and Tentative panels TBA: Zoom and in person

- Local USA 892, 705, 829/IATSE Representatives
- Local Professional from varied disciplines per students focus: Theatre, TV, Film, TV Award shows, Entertainment
- Stage managers/ADs, Producers, Costume Designers, Production Designers, Art Directors, Illustrators, Concept Artists, Various Artisans/Crafts From a variety of disciplines

March 14-20

Spring Break

Week 11-16

Class Tours, Panels, Portfolio Prep Continuing TBA

(See above list of activities)

Final Examination Date: Friday, May 6, 2022 9:00-10:00 AM

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester.

A letter of

verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible.

DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: <http://sait.usc.edu/>

[academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776

(Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) HYPERLINK

"mailto:ability@usc.edu" ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([HYPERLINK "http://www.usc.edu/scampus"](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) www.usc.edu/scampus or [HYPERLINK "http://scampus.usc.edu"](http://scampus.usc.edu) <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies

Syllabus Acknowledgement

This is a “contract” between the course instructor and the student. The University views the THTR 431 class syllabus as a contract; it is extremely important that you read and understand the contents of the document. To that end, please carefully read the THTR 431 syllabus and sign below, acknowledging receipt of the material and your understanding of the course expectations. If you have any questions or need further clarification on any section, please feel free to contact the instructor by the means listed at the beginning of the syllabus.

I have received THTR 431 Syllabus and understand the class expectations.

Student Name (Print)

Date

Signature